THE PETITION FOR THE PRELATES BRIEFLY EXAMINED.

Wherein you have theſe pleas for Prælacy, diſcuſſed, and anſwered.

1. *The pretended Antiquitie of Prelacy.*
2. *The qualitie of ſome men who have been Prelates, as Martyrs, and Champions for the Truth.*
3. *The pretended peaceable and proſperous times we have had, under Prelaticall Government.*
4. *The offence that many are ſaid will take, at the aboliſhing of it.*
5. *The pretended univerſall practiſe of the Chriſtian World.*
6. *The pretended ſutableneſſe of it to the policy of this State.*
7. *The pretended diſagreeing of ſuch, who deſire another Government.*
8. *The continuance of it for many Ages without any alteration.*
9. *Severall arguments to ſhew the unlawfullneſſe of Prelacy.*

EXOD. 21. 5, 6.

If the Servant ſhall ſay, I love my Maſter, I will not goe out free: Then, his Maſter ſhall bring him to the dore-poſt, and ſhall bore his eare through with an Awle, and hee ſhall ſerve him for ever.

Printed in the Yeare, 1641.

To the Reader.

IT will seeme nothing strange, that amidst so many Petitions against Prelacy, from all the parts of the Kingdome, some one should set forth, and appeare for it; if we consider, how many Papists and Popishly-affected have for many yeares found peace and ease under the shaddow thereof: How many members of the Prelaticall Hierachy do feele their Foundations shaken, and their Hopes blasted; How many Worldly-men doe feare the yoke of Christ, and shunne to be brought under the obedience of the Gospell; And how many there be that are mistaken with the conceipt of the externall pompe and glory of the Church, of the Governing of the Church by the rules of humane-policy, and of the dangers which may ensue upon alterations. Wee know that even Baal had the men of the Citty who plead-

ed for him: *That cursed* Iericho *found favour with* Hiel *the* Bethelite, *that many cryed out, great is* Diana; *and that the ruine of* Babylon, *although a matter of Halelujah to the* godly, *who finde in her the blood of* Prophets, *and of* Saints, *is bewailed and lamented by the* Marchants of the earth, *and such as have lived* deliciously *with her. The* Prelacy *was of late growne to such* Greatnesse *in this* Kingdome, *that it were a wonder, if it should not find some to up-hold it; and yet to such Insolency, that it were a wonder, if at this opportunity, it should not fall. Wee doe for our parts finde ourselves bound, both to warne, and call upon all men to be wise, and to observe the wonderfull worke of* God, *lest happily they be found fighting against* God; *and also to remoove stumbling blocks out of the way, that the weake bee not hindered or discouraged in praying and petitioning for a* Reformation, *which is all that is aimed at, in these following* pages.

The

THE PRELATICALL PETITION:

TO THE HONORABLE, THE *Knights, Cittizens, &c.*

The humble Petition of, &c.

HUMBLY SHEWETH,

THAT whereas there hath of late a Petition ſubſcribed by manie (who pretend to be Inhabitants of this Cittie) been delivered, received, and read in this HONORABLE Houſe, againſt the ancient, preſent, and by Law eſtabliſhed Governement of the Church, and that not ſo much for the Reformation of Biſhops, as for the utter ſubverſion and extirpation of Epiſcopacy it

ſelfe. We whoſe names are under written, to ſhew there bee many, and thoſe of the better ſort of the Inhabitants of this City, otherwiſe and better minded, doe humbly repreſent unto this Honourable houſe, theſe conſiderations following.

I. That Epiſcopacy is as ancient as Chriſtianity it ſelfe in this Kingdome.

II. That Biſhops were the chiefe inſtruments in the Reformation of this Church againſt Popery, and afterwards the moſt eminent Martyrs for the Proteſtant Religion, and ſince, the beſt and ableſt Champions for the defence of it.

III. That ſince the Reformation, the times have been very peaceable, happy, and glorious, notwithſtanding Epiſcopall government in the Church, and therefore that this government can be no cauſe of our unhappineſſe.

IV. Wee conceive that not onely many learned, but diverſe other Godly perſons would be much ſcandalled and troubled in Conſcience, if the government of Epiſcopacy, conceived by them, to be an Apoſtolicall inſtitution, were altered, and ſince there

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is so much care taken, that no man should be offended in the least Ceremony, we hope there will be some, that such mens Consciences may not be pressed upon, in a matter of an higher nature and consequence, especially considering that this government by Episcopacy, is not onely lawfull and convenient for edification, but likewise sutable and agreeable to the Civill policie and Government of this State.

V. That this Governement is lawfull, it appeares by the immediate, universall and constant practice of all the Christian world grounded upon Scripture, from the Apostles time to this last Age; for above 1500. yeares together. It being utterly incredible, if not impossible, that the whole Church for so long a time, should not discover by Gods word this government to be unlawfull, if it had been so: To which may bee added, that the most learned Protestants even in those very Churches, which now are not governed by Bishops, doe not only hold the government by Episcopacy to be lawfull, but wish, that they themselves might injoy it.

Againe,

Againe, that the Government by Episcopacy is not onely lawfull, but convenient for edification, or as much, or more conducing to Piety and devotion then any other, it appeares becauſe no modeſt man denies, that the primitive times were moſt famous for Piety, Conſtancy, & Perſeverance in the Faith, not-withſtanding, more frequent & more cruel perſecutions, then ever have bin ſince, & yet it is confeſſed, that the Church in thoſe times was govern'd by Biſhops.

Laſtly: That the Government of the Church by Epiſcopacy, is moſt ſutable to the frame and forme of the Civill government here in this Kingdome, it appeares by the happy & flouriſhing union of them both, for ſo long a time together, whereas no man can give us an aſſurance, how any Church government beſides this (whereof wee have had ſo long an experience) will ſuite and agree with the Civill policie of this State: And we conceive it may be of dangerous conſequence, for men of ſettled fortunes to hazzard their eſtates, by making ſo great an alteration, & venturing upon

on a new forme of Government, whereof neither we, nor our anceſtors have had any tryall, or experience; eſpecially conſidering that thoſe, who would have Epiſcopacy to be aboliſhed, have not yet agreed, nor (as we are verily perſwaded) ever will or can agree upon any other Common forme of government to ſucceed in the roome of it, as appeares by the many different and contrary draughts, and platformes they have made and publiſhed, according to the ſeverall humors and ſects of thoſe that made them, wheras, ſeeing every great alteration in a Church or State, muſt needs be dangerous, it is juſt and reaſonable that whoſoever would introduce a new form in ſtead of an old one, ſhould be obliged to demonſtrate and make it evidently appeare aforehand: that the Government he would introduce, is proportionably ſo much better, then that he would aboliſh, as may recompence the loſſe we may ſuſtaine, & may be worthy of the hazard we muſt run, in aboliſhing the one, and in introducing and ſetling of the other. But this we are confident can never bee done, in regard of this particular.

And therfore our humble and earneſt requeſt to this *Honourable houſe* is, that as well in this conſideration, as all the other aforeſaid, we may ſtill injoy that Government, which moſt probably holds its inſtitution from the *Apoſtles*, & moſt certainly its plantation with our *Chriſtian faith it ſelfe* in this Kingdome, where it hath ever ſince flouriſhed and continued for many ages without any interuption or alteration, whereby it plainly appeares, that as it is the moſt excellent government in it ſelfe: ſo it is the moſt ſutable, moſt agreeable, & every way moſt proportionable to the Civill conſtitutions and temper of this State: and therefore We pray & hope will alwaies be continued, & preſerved in it and by it, notwithſtanding the abuſes and corruptions which in ſo long tract of time through the errors or negligence of men have crept into it, which abuſes and corruptions beeing all of them (what & how many ſoever they may bee) but meerely accidentall to Epiſcopacy. We conceive and hope, there may be a Reformation of the one, without deſtruction of the other, which is the humble Suit of &c.

THE

THE PETITION FOR THE *PRELATES* Briefly Examined.

WEE whose names are underwritten, to shew there be many and those of the better sort of the Inhabitants of this Citie, otherwise and better minded, doe humbly represent unto this Honourable House, these Considerations. *Pet.*

How much better these Petitioners are than the former, let not their own judgements, but their work determine. Wee will not examine their mindes, what they think, but their considerations, what they publish, which are: *Anſ.*

1. *That Episcopacy is as ancient, as Christianitie it selfe in this Kingdome.* *Pet.*

This is a consideration to gaine time by, how farre about must wee goe to search all antiquitie, before the strength of this consideration can come *Anſ.* 1.

to an iſſue. The moſt ſpeedy and beſt way of determining, is to goe to that which is moſt ancient, the certaine infallible rule.

2 Hiſtory tells us, that Chriſtianitie came into *England* by *Simon Zelotes*, and *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, who lived in the times of penning that Scripture, which muſt be the rule of our Church government; put us not off therefore with the ruſt of your antiquitie, but give us the gold of divine truth.

In Brittanniam Simonem Zelotem veniſſe. Niceph. l. 2. c. 4. ſcribit, Joſephum Arimatheenſem à Philippo Apoſtolo poſt diſperſionem ex Galliis in Brittanniam miſſum eſſe circa annum Dom. 63. Eumq; toto vitæ ſuæ tempore in iis terris Doctrinam Chriſti tradidiſſe, Balæus ex Anglicis quibuſdam Scriptoribus inter quos et Gildam nominat, aſſeverat, Cent. 1. Magdeburg. l. 2. c. 2. & Cent. 1. l. 1, c. 10.

3 If whereſoever mention is made of Biſhops in the Hiſtory of Antiquitie, you bring it to prove the lawfulneſſe of your Biſhops in controverſie, you abuſe the Reader; for we ſay that Biſhops indeed are ancient, but ſuch Biſhops as the Scriptures ſpeake of, namely, Presbyters in ſeverall Congregations. St. *Patrick* in his time had founded in *Ireland* three hundred ſixty five Churches, and ordeined ſo many Biſhops. *Euſebius* tells us of one *Soticus*, Biſhop of the Village of *Comanbind*; *Theodoret* of *Mares* Biſhop of a ſmall towne called *Solicha*; *Jerome* of *Aſclepias* Biſhop of a ſmall towne in *Africa*. What antiquitie relates concerning the government of Churches within themſelves, and how ſmaller Churches in villages came to be under the power of Paſtors of greater Churches in Cities, is very obſervable. Thus we find

Nenn. Hiſt. Britt.

Euſebius l. 5. c. 16.

Theod. l. 5. c. 4.

Ierom. Tom. 1. 5.

find it written. The policy of the Churches was like that of members in one body, where all ſuffer together, and are helpfull each to other: hence we have ſo many Epiſtles of Churches and Teachers writ to others, which came neither from ſubjection or authoritie, but from love and deſire of edifying; but becauſe the light of the Goſpel, ſet vp in ſome one Citie, by little and little did inlighten the leſſer Townes adjacent, therefore thoſe Churches did acknowledge and reverence that Citie, from whence the light of the Goſpel ſprung to them, as their Mother; and did conſult with the Officers thereof in controverſies and things pertaining to the Church; and if any thing were not well done, they did admoniſh and freely rebuke one another, and friendly ſubject each to other. Thoſe that exceld in gifts Lorded it not over others, but miniſtred unto them; but thoſe Churches where the Apoſtles and other eminent men taught, were of great eſteeme and honored accordingly. But this cuſtome afterwards grew to a Law, as appeares by the Nicene Councell, where ſome Churches, with their Biſhops, are made ſubject by a Law, and compeld to obey ſome other one Church and her Biſhop. And in this age, namely, the ſecond Century, the Story ſayth, It cannot be ſhewed by the teſtimony of any approved Author, that of ſo many Churches as were planted by the Apoſtles, any one did arrogate ſu-

Erat ſane tum talis politia in Eccleſiis ſicut membrorum in uno corpore, ubi omnia unà compatiuntur proſpiciunt ac medentur, hinc ſunt tot Epiſtolæ aliarum Eccleſiarum et doctorũ, ad alias ſcriptæ quæ non ex imperio aut ſubjectione quadam proficiſcebãtur, ſed ex charitate et ædificãdi ſtudio. Quum vero lux Evangelii in una aliqua Civitate accenſa, paulatim vicinas urbes & oppidula illuminabat, & ex bene conſtitutis eccleſiis, ubi erant doctores eruditione pietate & conſtantia inſignes ſeminaria prodibant, & quaſi coloniæ Chriſtianæ deducebantur, ideo eæ Eccleſiæ quaſi matrem agnoſcebant, hæc vero conſuetudo juxta verbum Dei obſervata, hoc ſæculo & ſequenti in legem abiit, ut in Nicæno Concilio, &c. Magdeburg. Cent. 1a. cap. 7.

periority over others, by divine or Apoſtolicall authoritie, neither did other Churches acknowledg, or honour any one of them as ſuperior, whoſe Biſhop ſhould have power to appoint Ceremonies or make Decrees, to which all ſhould be bound.

4 The Conſtitution of Dioceſan Biſhops in *England*, was firſt in imitation of the Heathens, who had their Arch-Flamins, and Flamins, in ſtead whereof that the Chriſtians might gaine them to their Religion, the ſeate of the Arch-Flamins of *London*, *York*, and *Cheſter*, were changed into the ſeas of three Archbiſhops, and of the Flamins into the ſeas of Biſhops; and one *Devotus* Biſhop of *Wincheſter*, had all the poſſeſſions of the Pagan-Flamins, even twelve miles compaſſe round about the Citie conferd upon him and his Clergie, in which were conteined thirty-two Villages.

Vid. Paget. Chriſtianographiæ, where the Authors are cited.

5 The Chriſtian world knew no Dioceſes made up of many Pariſhes, till the yeare 267. as *Polidore Virgill* teſtifies, therefore Dioceſan Biſhops cannot be ſo ancient as Chriſtianitie in *England*.

Polid. de invent. l. 4. c. 9.

6 Suppoſe Biſhops were ſo ancient, as you pretend, yet they may be Antichriſtian, becauſe the Scripture tells us, that Antichriſt began to work in the Apoſtles time.

Pet. 2. *That Biſhops were the chiefe inſtruments in the reformation of the Church againſt Popery.*

Anſ. 1. That ſome good men ſhould not ſee the evill of Epiſcopacy in the darkneſſe of Popery, it is no marvaile.

2 If their places were therefore good, becauſe the men

men were instruments of reformation, then now their places are naught, because they are Inlets and instruments of so much corrupting Innovation.

Most of the Bishops then were the chiefe hinderers of the reformation, witnesse *Martin Bucer* in a speech of his to King *Edward*, Your Majestie (saith he) doth see, that this restoring againe the kingdome of Christ, which we require, yea, which the salvation of us all requireth, may in no wise be expected to come of the Bishops, seing there be so few among them which doe understand the power and proper offices of this kingdome, and very many of them by all meanes (which possibly they can and dare) either oppose themselves against it, or defer and hinder it. 3

Martin Bucer de regno Christi. l. 2, c. 1.

Had not King *Edward*, though young, set his heart for Reformation more than the best of the Bishops, it had never proceeded so farre as it did, when *Cranmer* and *Ridley* pressed him to permit his Sister the Lady *Mary* to have Masse in her house, the King having heard what they could say, replyed out of the Scriptures so fully, that they were inforced to give place to his replication, and grant the same to be true. Then they after long debating with his Majestie in this manner, laboured politiquely in another sort, and alledged what dangers the denying thereof might bring to his Grace, what breach of amitie on the Emperours part, what troubles, what unkindnesses, and what occasions sundry wayes it would inforce; unto whom the King answered, willing them to 4

content

content themſelves, for he would, he ſaid, ſpend his life, and all he had, rather than to agree and grant to that he knew to be againſt the truth. The which when the Biſhops heard, notwithſtanding they urged him ſtill to grant, and would by no meanes have his nay. Then the good King ſeeing their importunate ſuite, in the end his tender heart burſting out into bitter weeping and ſobbing, he deſired them to be content; whereat the Biſhops wept as faſt as he, and acknowledged, the good King had more Divinitie in his little finger, than they had in all their bodies.

Fox Martyrol. in Ed. 6. p. 653. edit. 1631.

Pet. 3. *Biſhops were moſt eminent Martyrs.*

Anſ. 1. Of many Biſhops there were ſome few Martyrs, but what Biſhops were they? *Latimer* upon the comming forth of the ſix Articles in King *Henry* the eight his time, did freely and of his own accord, reſigne his Biſhoprick, and when he put off his Rochet, ſuddenly he skipped for joy, feeling his ſhoulders ſo light, being diſcharged (as he ſaid) of ſo heavy a burden, and gloried in the title of a *Quondam*. *Hooper* was another, and he made ſupplication to the King, deſiring his Highneſſe either to diſcharge him of the Biſhoprick, or els to diſpence with him of ſuch ceremoniall orders, as were required of him. Alſo concerning Ceremonies, he ſaith thus; Behold how fearfull a thing it is, though the intent be never ſo good, even to adorne and beautifie the Inſtitutions, Decrees, and Ordinances of God, with any device of man, without the appointment of God in his Word; yea, it is no leſſe abhominable in the ſight of

Acts and Mon. de Hoopero.

Epiſt. to King Edw. 6.

of God, then if a man should accuse him of ignorance and foolishnesse. Speaking of the Supper of the Lord, he saith, The outward preparation the more simple it is, the better it is, and the neerer the Institution of Christ and his Apostles. If you have bread, wine, a Table, and a faire Table-cloth, be not sollicitous and carefull for the rest, seeing they are things brought in, not by Christ, but by Popes. He also speaketh expresly against kneeling at the Lords Supper, the Surplesse, with all the monuments, tokens, and leavings of Papistry, and that Excommunication should not be done by the Bishop alone, but by the Bishop and all the Parish.

Serm. 6. *ibid. plura.*

Serm. 1. upon *Jonah.*

Serm. 3. and in his Declar. of the eighth Command.

Ridley also when they put on his Episcopall robes, for his degradation he vehemently inveighed against that apparell, calling it foolish and abominable, yea too fond for a vice in a play.

Acts & Mon.

Bishop *Farrer* was another Martyr, and he was so strongly set against their superstitious Ceremonies, that they made an Article against him for refusing to weare a square cap.

Acts & Mon.

What Bishops have you more that were Martyrs, except *Cranmer*, and you see what manner of men these were, and by that little taste of their non-conformity, you may judge they would have been as forward to the work of Reformation as any other, had they lived in these times.

If some Bishops, being Martyrs, argues the goodnesse of their place, then other Bishops being persecutors of the Martyrs, as *Bonner* and *Gardner*, argues the evill of their places.

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3 If you account ſo highly of the teſtimony of Martyrs, heare what that famous Martyr the Lord *Cobham* in *Hen.* 5. his time ſaith, that the Pope is the great head of Antichriſt, the Prieſts and Prelates and Monkes the body, and Friars the taile.

Act. and Mon. p. 733. Edit. 1631.

Pet. 4. *And ſince were the beſt Champions for the defence of it.*

Anſ. 1. The moſt famous champions we have had in *England* for the truth, have been ſuch as have either been fully againſt Biſhops, or that have held Presbyters and Biſhops to be all one.

Cited out of Maſter *Fox* by *Cartwright* in his ſecond Reply againſt *Whitgift. p.* 526. Doctor *Barnes* was condemned for ſaying thus, I will never beleeve, nor can ever beleeve, that one may by the law of God be Biſhop of two or three Cities, yea of a whole Countrey; for that it is contrary to the doctrine of St. *Paul*, who writing unto *Titus*, commandeth that he ſhould ordeine a Biſhop in every Towne.

Maſter *Tindall* in his Book of the obedience of a Chriſtian man, *pag.* 114. ſaith, As thou canſt heale no diſeaſe, except thou begin at the roote, ſo canſt thou preach againſt no miſchiefe, except thou begin at the Biſhops. Moreover, in his defence of the Engliſh tranſlation, he ſaith; Theſe over-ſeers, which now we call Biſhops, after the Greek word, were alwayes abiding in one place, to governe the Congregation there.

Doctor *Reynolds*, as great a Champion for the truth, as any of the Prelates, in his Letter to Sir *Francis Knowles*, requiring his reſolution, whether the authority, Biſhops have amongſt us, be Gods

Gods own ordinance, answereth negatively, and proveth at large by Writers old and new, that the now Archbishop Doctor *Bancroft* was in an errour for preaching otherwise.

Doctor *Fulke* against the Rhemists upon *Titus* the 1. 5. affirmeth, that albeit for order and seemly government, there was always one principall, to whom by long use of the Church the name Bishop was applyed; yet in the Scripture a Bishop and an Elder, is of one order and authoritie.

Doctor *Whittaker* in his Answer to *Campian* his ten reasons, sayes, that *jure divino*, a Presbyter and Bishop are both one, and if *Aerius* were an heretike for saying so, *Ierome* certeinly was a kin to the same heresie. *Resp. ad Camp. 10. vol.*

We might produce many others, as Doctor *Humphry Holland*, *Beacon*, *Bale*, *Fox*, *Bradford*, and others, which of necessitie we forbeare, to prevent tediousnesse. Onely one who himselfe was a Bishop, and one of the chiefe Champions against Papists, yet acknowledged Episcopacy not to be by divine right; for citing a place out of *Austin*, affirming that the office of a Bishop is above the office of a Priest, after the names of honour which the custome of the Church hath now attained, he addes himselfe, but not by the authority of the Scripture; where also he consents to that of *Ierome*, Let Bishops understand, that they are above Priests, rather of custome, than of any truth or right of Christs Institution; and this he doth in opposition to *Harding*, pleading superioritie of Bishops. *Jewell defence, Pet. 2. c. 3. divis. 5.*

Pet. 5. *Since the Reformation the times have been very peaceable, happy, and glorious, notwithstanding Episcopall government.*

Anſ. 1. To whom have the times been ſo? Indeed Biſhops and their Creatures have lived in pompe, but how many hundreds of faithfull laborious Miniſters have been caſt out from all their meanes of livelihood, themſelves and their families put to lamentable extremities? how many have been impriſoned and brought to untimely ends there? How many have been driven out of their deare Countrey? What reproaches and contempt hath been caſt upon thoſe that remaine? no reformed Church in all the world can ſhew ſuch lamentable miſeries, that their Miniſters and people have been put unto for their Conſciences, and that in things of as low a nature, as in *England* can be ſhewed.

2 For that proſperitie we have had, no thankes to Biſhops; for the lower Biſhops were as in Queene *Elizabeths* time, the greater was our proſperity: But ſince the Biſhops grew to that height (they were lately in) our proſperitie hath been as much leſſened; witneſſe the lamentable complaints and outcryes of the whole Kingdome againſt the miſeries cauſed by them; If the lower they were, the more proſperous we were, then if they were not at all, wee may very well expect more proſperitie than ever.

3 This Argument of proſperitie is the ſame that Heathens brought againſt Chriſtians, one *Symmachus* againſt whom *Prudentius* writ in an Epiſtle to *Theodoſius*

Theodosius the Emperour, used this argument to perswade continuance in the old Religion of the Romanes, because their Common-wealth had been most fully flourishing all the time they worshipped *Iupiter*, *Apollo*, and their other Gods. So likewise the Heathen persecutors of Christians used to say, when any evill befell them: Now are we not so fortunate as we were wont to be, because we suffer the Christians, and because wee worship not our Gods with that zeale as formerly. *Whitak. de Eccl. contr. 2. q. 5. c. 16.*

6. *We conceive that many learned and godly persons would be much scandalized and troubled in conscience, if the government by Episcopacy were altered.* *Pet.*

We confesse in things indifferent, that governours in commanding and all men in practizing ought to be very carefull in giving offence; the Scripture layes downe Rules for ordering us in things indifferent, which binde Governours aswell as others. The Apostles had as much authoritie in the Church as ever any since, and yet they durst not enjoyne a thing indifferent, which was offensive, but counted it necessary to abstain from that which was offensive, though in its owne nature indifferent, as in the matter of eating blood, *Act.* 15. But in such things wherein we are not at all left to our libertie, the Rules of offence take no place; If any will be offended for doing our dutie, wee must not therefore forbeare. *Ans.* 1.

The keeping in of Bishops in these times wherein God so clearly oppose them, will be the grea- 2.

teſt offence that ever was given to the people of *England*, and other reformed Churches, and a ſpeciall hardning of our adverſaries, even the Papiſts themſelves, who doe extreamely contend for Epiſcopacy to be *jure divino*, witneſſe that Booke of *Franciſcus a Sancta Clara*, called *Apologia pro Epiſcopis*; and that Cannon of the Councell of [a] *Trent*, If any man ſhall ſay, that Biſhops are not above Presbyters, let him be *Anathema*. And that you may ſee, what a dangerous offence it is, conſider what miſchievous inferences they make from thence; as that the Miniſters of all reformed Churches (where Epiſcopacy is not) are no true Miniſters, and their Miniſtery to be altogether invalid, and their Churches to be no true Churches; witneſſe that of *Janſenius*, cited by *Voetius*; [b] The Biſhop onely may call and ordaine Elders, and whoſoever in caſe of neceſſitie ſhall be ordeined by the Church and Presbyters, he is no Presbyter, and his whole Miniſtry is invalid. Alſo that of the Papiſts, cited by *Gerardus*, who ſaith thus; [c] The Papiſt laying this foundation, that Biſhops are above Presbyters *jure divino*, doe inferre, that *Luther* had no power of ordaining Miniſters, becauſe he was no Biſhop, but onely a Presbyter, and by conſequence, that there are no true Miniſters in our Churches. And no marvaile, if Papiſts ſay ſo abroad, when our late Archprelate in

a *Si quis dixerit Epiſcopos non eſſe presbyteris ſuperiores, Anathema ſit Concil. Trident. Seſs. 23. c. 4.*

Pontificii exiſtimant, Epiſcopos presbyteris jure divino quoad poteſtatem tum ordinis tum juriſdictionis ſuperiores eſſe. Gerar. de miniſt. Eccleſiaſtico.

b *Solus Epiſcopus poteſt vocare et ordinare presbyteros, & quicunque in ſtatu neceſſitatis ab Eccleſia et presbyterio fuit ordinatus non eſt presbyter, & invalidum eſt omne ejus miniſterium. Voet. Deſperat. cauſ. Pap. l. 2. c. 9.* c *Vnde porro inferunt Lutherum non habuiſſe poteſtatem alios miniſtros ordinandi cum non fuit Epiſcopus, ſed duntaxat presbyter & per conſequens nullos hodie in Eccleſiis noſtris eſſe veros miniſtros. Gerard. de miniſterio Eccleſiaſtico.*

open

open Court at home called Reverend Master *Calvin* Rascall, and said of those Protestant Churches, that they were no Churches, because they had no Bishops; now what a scandall this is, let the World judge.

7. *That Episcopacy is not onely lawfull, but convenient for Edification.* *Pet.*

What edification have we by Bishops, unlesse edification of Altars, Images, and Popery? but for edification of soules by the Word, who are greater enemies thereunto than Bishops? Preaching twice a day is sufficient to put a conformable Minister into their black Bill, yea, to suspend him from his Ministry. In Catechising they forbid any further exposition than the giving the bare grammaticall sense of their forme. And for Prayer, wherein the Apostle makes it a chiefe work of the Ministers of the Gospell, to give themselves to prayer as well as the Ministry of the Word, they will suffer no other than reading in a Booke and saying over the fifty fift Canon. *Anſ.* 1. *Act.* 6.

In other reformed Churches, where are no Bishops, in every Congregation there is a preaching Minister, but for *England*, where is now a setled maintenance for the Ministery, and as many able men as in any other place; yet there are diverse thousands of Congregations without a preaching Ministry, and for one Sermon they preach themselves, they hinder many hundreds. It is little good that Prelates doe in this kinde. More of God and his Kingdome hath appeared in some one Congregation, where a Minister hath beene 2

whom

whom they have silenced or deprived, than in all the Bishops families in *England*; could any godly Minister indure such a Parish as Lambeth is, if he had such power to reforme as the Arch-Prelate had.

3 When the Parliament hath examined what men the Prelates have put into places, it will appeare what edification people have had by their means; what places have been more miserably provided for in all the Kingdome, than those that Prelates and Cathedralls have had the disposing of. Neither hath this been thorough some particular personall corruptions, but the whole Kingdome can witnesse, how generally this hath beene ever since the reformation; and if this be your edification, wee beseech the Lord in mercy to deliver us from it.

Pet. 8. *Episcopacy is suteable and agreeable to the civill policy and government of this State.*

Ans. 1. What is by divine Institution, is agreeable to all States, and what is against it, cannot be agreeable to any Christian government.

2 We see by our neighbours how agreeable it hath been to civill government; hath it not endangered to bring all things into confusion amongst them.

3 We our selves have had full experience, how the Prelates and that faction have stopped the course of Law, and lifted up themselves above it. Priests in parishes above the Magistrates there, and Bishops above the Nobles. The government of our Kingdome is by Parliamentary and Common

mon Law, but they ſeek to rule againſt either, as appeares by their Commiſſion, which they have got for the high Commiſſion. In the coppy whereof theſe are their words; That you our ſaid Commiſſioners, and every of you, ſhall diligently and faithfully execute this our Commiſſion, and every part and branch thereof in manner and forme aforeſaid, and according to the true meaning thereof, notwithſtanding any appellation, provocation, priviledg or exemption in that behalfe to be had, made, pretended or alleadged by any perſon or perſons, reſident or dwelling in any place or places, exempt or not exempt within theſe our Realmes of *England*, and *Ireland*, and Dominion of *Wales*, any our Lawes, Statutes, Proclamations, or other Grants, Priviledges, or Ordinances which be or may ſeeme contrary to the premiſſes notwithſtanding.

A coppy of the high Commiſſion for cauſes Eccleſiaſticall, in *England*, *Ireland*, and *Wales*, dated 17. *Decemb.* *An.* 9. *Caroli.*

King *Philip* the husband of Queen *Mary* thought it ſo inconſiſtent with Civill government by the Nobilitie, that upon his death-bed calling his Sonne unto him, he gave him this counſell; If you intend to rule by your Nobles, keepe your Biſhops low, and if you would rule by your Biſhops, keep your Nobles low. What diſturbance in Civill States this power of Prelates with Kings hath made, our *Engliſh* Records doe ſufficiently teſtifie, which no true Engliſh ſpirit can reade or relate without a ſadned ſpirit. *Matthew Paris* in his Hiſtory tells us of the great power that *Peter* Biſhop of *Wincheſter*, and *Peter Rivall*, the Biſhops Couſen, with other adherents, had with K. *H.* 3.

4

Grimſtone.

Great complaints were made, that by their counsell the Kings heart was turned from the love of his subjects, and the hearts of them from him, and discord was sown amongst them; and that by the said counsell of the foresaid Bishop and his fellowes, King *Iohn* the Kings Father, lost first the hearts of his Barons, after that lost *Normandy*, and after that other Lands also, and in the end wasted all his treasure, and the Kingdome for a long time after had no quiet. By the said counsell also, *England* that was the Prince of Provinces, became Tributary. Moreover, through their wicked counsell, saith the Story, at this present, great perturbation seemed to hang over the Realme; for if it had not been for their counsell, and if that true justice and judgement might have been administred unto the Kings subjects, these tumults had never been stirred, and the King might have had his Land unwasted, and his treasure unconsumed. The said Bishop impiously tels the Nobles, that the King right well might call unto him what forreiners and strangers he listed, by whom he might be able to bridle his proud and rebellious subjects, and so to keep them in awe and good order: Whereupon the Nobles in great perturbation departed, promising amongst themselves in this case, which touched the state of the whole Realme, they would constantly joyne together, even unto death.

Mathew Paris.

5 The great divisions in the Common-wealth presently after *Constantines* time, were made by the Bishops; which the Historians of those times doe plentifully testifie. This

This is not our judgement alone, heare what Maſter *Tindall* ſaith in his booke of Chriſtian obedience; Woe unto the Realmes where Biſhops are of the Kings Councell; as profitable are they verily unto the Realmes with their Counſells, as wolves unto the ſheep, or the foxes unto the geeſe. 6

In *France* the Reformed Churches not under Biſhops, are as good and faithfull ſubjects unto their Prince, and ſo acknowledged by himſelfe, though of another Religion, as any hee hath. Hence it appeares, that that government which is not Prelaticall, may ſtand with the peace and civill order of a State as well as it. 7

9. *That this government is lawfull, appeares by the immediate and conſtant practice of all the Chriſtian world, grounded upon Scripture from the Apoſtles time to this laſt age, for above fifteene hundred yeares together.* *Pet.*

To that which they ſay, its grounded upon Scripture, we ſhall ſpeak afterwards, but to ſay that this was the practice of all the Chriſtian world for fifteene hundred yeares, is a bold aſſertion. We finde in Hiſtory that the Church of *Scotland* was not governed by Biſhops till betweene foure or five hundred yeares after Chriſt, although it had flouriſhed in the Chriſtian Religion two or three hundred yeares before. *Anſ.* 1. *Johannes Major. l. 2. Hiſtor. de geſtis Scotor. c. 2.*

We anſwer as before, its true indeed, that in all times for fifteene hundred yeares there were Biſhops, but in this time of the Apoſtles and preſently after, Biſhops were much different from that they are now; as 2

1. Then they were Parochiall not Dioceſan.

2. Even in thoſe times when Epiſcopacy began to grow to ſome height, yet the election of Biſhops was by the whole Church, but it is not ſo now.

3. There was not that ſuperioritie of them over other Miniſters as there is now.

4. They challenged not the power of Ordination and Church cenſures to themſelves, as now they doe.

Theſe foure wee undertake now to ſhew you briefly, becauſe ere long you ſhall have them diſcuſſed more largely upon another occaſion.

For the firſt; Biſhops were Parochiall not Dioceſan; for there were Biſhops of Villages and ſmall Townes, as *Sozomen* in his ſeventh booke teſtifies; and according to *Euſebius*, Churches wherein were Biſhops, were called Pariſhes, *lib.* 3. 44. *lib.* 4. *ep.* 25. *l.* 2. *c.* 6.

Ignat. ad Philadel. *Ignatius* ſaith, Every Church ſhould have her Communion Table, and every Church her Biſhop.

Cypr. l. 1. *ep.* 47. 58. 68. And *Cyprian* ſaith, The bounds of a Church were not greater than a Biſhop might call together the whole multitude about the affayres of it.

For the ſecond; Theſe Biſhops were choſen by the whole Church. *Ambroſe* ſaith, That is truely and certainly a divine Election of a Biſhop, which is made by the whole Church. *Ambroſ. ep.* 82.

Platin. in vita Adriani 2*di.* *Platina* tells us, that *Ludovicus* the ſecond commanded by his Letters, that the Romans ſhould chooſe their owne Biſhop, not looking for ſtrangers

gers to meddle in it, for it belonged to the Citizens.

Ambroſe complaines to *Nepotianus* of the great diſorder in the clergy, that they run to Biſhops Suffragans, certaine times of the yeare, and bringing ſome ſumme of money, they are ordained being choſen of none; And the Biſhop without any lawfull Election is choſen in private of the Canons or Prebendaries onely, without the knowledge of the people. *Ambroſ. ep. ad Nepotianum.*

For the third; They had not ſuperioritie over other Miniſters, as they have now.

The Helvetian Confeſſ. 5. 12. hath theſe words, Equall power is given to all Miniſters of the Church: from the beginning no one preferred himſelfe before another, ſaving onely for order, ſome one did call them together, propounded the matters that were to be conſulted of, and gathered the voices.

The honour of a Biſhop being taken from the reſt of the Miniſters, and given to one, was the firſt ſtep to Papacy. *Muſculus.*

Power of Ordination belonged likewiſe to Presbyters, for beſides the evidence of Scripture; the third Canon of the Councell of *Carthage* ſaies; The Biſhop giving the bleſſing, let all the Elders there preſent lay on their hands.

That they had not the power of Church cenſures to themſelves, *Cyprian* ſaith, that the Presbyters and other Church Officers have as well power to abſolve, as the Biſhop. And in another place, for as much as abſolution belongs unto all, I alone dare not doe it. *Cypr. ep. 14.* *Ep. 19.*

And

Auguſt. lib. 3. contr. Permen. And *Auguſtine*, it helpeth much to make the party more aſhamed, that he be excommunicated by the whole Church.

Ierom: ad Demetriad. ep. 1. *Ierome*, The Elders have intereſt in other cenſures of the Church, and the Church it ſelfe in excommunication.

Now if there be ſuch difference betweene our Biſhops and the former, why do you againe bring their antiquitie? your repetition leads us in our anſwer to come againe to the ſame thing; may not all ſee how egregiouſly you ſeeke to deceive the Reader with great words, in pretending that Dioceſan Biſhops were of ſo long ſtanding, becauſe Biſhops were. We ſee by this deceit, how dangerous it is to take words that are common to many things, and appropriate them to a particular, if it once gaine the appropriation of a name or title, it will ſoone challenge the thing it ſelfe, and the keeping up the name after it hath been abuſed, will keepe up the thing it ſelfe, and therefore no marvaile though men contend ſo much for keeping the name of Biſhops. We finde in the notes of the Rhemiſts upon that place, 1 *Tim. 6. v.* 20. They contend much for the keeping their old termes, let us keep our forefathers words, ſay they, and we ſhall eaſily keep our old faith; let them ſay amendment, let us ſay penance, let them ſay the Lords Supper, let us ſay the Maſſe, let them ſay the Communion Table, let us ſay the Altar, let them ſay Elders, Miniſters, let us ſay Prieſt, let them ſay Superintendent, let us ſay Biſhop, &c. They and wee all have experience

what

what power words and names have, the ſpirit of theſe Rhemiſts have been lately in many of our men, they began to alter the former language, but told you at firſt, they meant no hurt by the words and names they put upon things, and now in this controverſie about Epiſcopacy, their chiefe prevailing Argument, is the very word Biſhop, which we acknowledge to be a Scripture word, but applied ſo as they doe, to a certaine kinde of ſuperior Officer in the Miniſtry of their owne deviſing, when God gives it to all Miniſters of the Goſpell; this we ſay hath much evill in it, and the retaining of it, in this ſenſe, is very dangerous.

10. *The moſt learned Proteſtants in thoſe Churches which now are not governed by Biſhops, doe not onely hold the government to be lawfull, but wiſh that they themſelves may enjoy it.* *Pet.*

This is boldly ſaid, but we know the quite contrary to to be true, both by their writings and by thoſe that have lived amongſt them. *Gerard*, in whom wee may ſee the minde of the reformed Churches as much as in any, ſaith; Wee doe not acknowledge any inequalitie of Juriſdiction that Biſhops have over Presbyters *jure divino*, ſeeing the contrary may be gathered out of Scripture, as from *Act.* 20. 17, 18. and divers other places by him cited. He alſo brings the teſtimony of *Ierome*, *Ambroſe*, *Auſtin*, *Sedulius*, *Primaſius*, *Chryſoſtomus*, *Theodoret*, *Oecumenius*, and *Theophylact*, and anſwers the contrary Arguments of *Bellarmine*. *Chamierus* alſo who fully knew the minde of the *Anſ.*

Poteſtatem juriſdictionis jure divino quandam inter Epiſcopos et Preſbyteros inequalem eſſe non agnoſcimus, cum ex ſcripturis contrarium colligi poſſit, &c. Gerard. de miniſt. Eccl. in fol. p. 260.

Chamier de pontifice Oecumenico, l. 2. c. 2.

the reformed Churches, ſaith thus: That in the firſt beginning of the Churches, there were no ſuch Biſhops as were afterwards inſtituted, to wit, ſuch as *ſuo jure* were over the Clergy, ſuch ſaith he, were not inſtituted by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and becauſe that is beſt which is firſt, it were better for the Churches, if they were all eſteemed to be of equall right and degree; and when that diſtinct order of the Biſhops from the Presbyters was firſt brought in, the Biſhops were not the Monarchs of the Church, nor had power over the Clergy, but only ſome of the chiefe were choſen to goe before others in deliberation and compoſing of matters. And leſt you ſhould think the judgement of the Divines of the Reformed Churches to be altered, take what *Voetius* Profeſſor of *Utrecht* hath formerly writ, and of late ſaid. What he hath writ, you may read in his learned Tractate *de deſperata cauſa Papatus*; where amongſt much againſt Epiſcopacy, he hath theſe paſſages: [a] Wee have more than abundantly proved, that pretended Epiſcopacy is not *jure divino*. Againe, [b] either we are not hereticks in this point, or the Fathers and Doctors are hereticks with us. And that you might not flatter your ſelves in conceiting, that the reformed Churches wiſh for your government, he ſaith, [c] Wee who have not that order of Biſhops, ſtand not in need of them from the *Engliſh* And for his ſpeech; when Biſhop *Halls* book in defence of Epiſcopacy came forth, he ſaid, What will this poore fellow doe? he hath of late read many Lectures againſt the ſuperiority and juriſdiction of the Biſhops.

a *Ex ſuperabundanti probamus non eſſe jure divino pretenſum Epiſcopatum.*

b *Aut nos non ſumus hæretici hac in parte aut patres & doctores illi nobiſcum fuere hæretici.*

c *Et nos qui ordine illo Epiſcoporum caremus neq; etiam indigemus ab Anglicanis.*

11. *Againe*,

11. *Againe, the government of Episcopacy, &c.* *Pet.*

Here you repeate the argument of Antiquitie againe, and cry up your great *Diana*, but concerning the Episcopacy of the Primitive times, we have said enough before. The bringing this over againe, with so faire a glosse, is but to deceive the World. *Ans.*

12. *That the government of the Church by Episcopacy, is most suteable to the frame of the Civill government in this Kingdome, appeares by the happie and flourishing union of them both for so long a time together.* *Pet.*

Considering what persecutions and distractions there have been in both Kingdomes, by meanes of them, neither wee nor the other Kingdome have cause to boast much of flourishing happinesse. *Ans.* 1.

What good hath been by the union of the Kingdomes, cannot be attributed to the Prelates; but what evill hath come by the disunion, hath been apparantly by them. 2

13. *No man can give us assurance, how any Church government besides this will sute well with the civill policy of this State.* *Pet.*

Whatsoever we desire in this kinde, is no other then according to the Word, and wee and you may assure our selves, that so long as wee walke according to that rule, peace shall be upon us, and upon the Israell of God. *Ans.* 1.

This is an argument, Pagans have used against the Christians, wee have worshipped our Gods all this while, and if we bring in any new way of worship, we know not what the issue will be. 2 *Vid. Whitaker de Eccles. ut supra.*

3 Wee are already ſure that Epiſcopall government hath been a wofull trouble and diſturbance to ours and other States, as hath been ſhewed before.

Pet. 14. *We conceive it may be of dangerous conſequence, for men of ſetled fortunes to hazard their eſtates, &c.*

Anſ. This ſeems to be a threatning clauſe, as if ſome miſchievous thing were intended by the Epiſcopall party, ſutable to the expreſſion of one who labouring to promote the petition, urged it with this argument, that there would be no living for men in *England*, unleſſe they would ſubſcribe to it.

Pet. 15. *Thoſe who would have Epiſcopacy aboliſhed, have not yet agreed, nor as wee are perſwaded ever can or will agree upon any other common forme of Government.*

Anſ. 1. If Epiſcopacy were gone, the agreement would be eaſie; as we ſee in *Scotland*, while Epiſcopacy was amongſt them, there was no ſmall diſagreement, but ſince the removall thereof, they are of one heart and minde.

2 There is no government in any Reformed Church, from which there are ſo many rents, under which there are ſo many diviſions, as that government of Epiſcopacy which wee have in *England.*

3 Many men are afraid to diſcover themſelves freely, for feare if Epiſcopacy hold, it will be hereafter revenged upon them, having had ſo much experience of the cruelty of men in that place, whereas if it were downe, they would be more

more free to ſhew their opinions, and to cloſe with their brethren in the truth.

Reformed Churches in all places doe agree, and why ſhould not wee thinke there would be agreement amongſt us, if Epiſcopacy were removed? 4

They who ſeeme moſt to differ, yet they differ not one from another ſo much, as they all differ from Epiſcopacy. They profeſſe one to another, that they can walke as brethren together in enjoying communion one with another in peace and love. 5

You ſeeme to rejoyce in the ſuppoſall of diſſenſions between others, thinking thereby to gaine time, but that you may ſee, there is not ſo vaſt a difference amongſt us as you think, in theſe things wee are all agreed. 6

Church diſcipline is to be learned from the plaine and perfect Word of God, and in ſuch particulars as are common to the Church with other Societies, is to be directed by the light of nature, the Church obſerving alwayes the generall rules of the Word. 1

A particular Church conſiſteth of ſuch as in the uſe of the ordinances of Chriſt, doe joyne together in one body and ſocietie, to walke in all the wayes of Chriſt; neither are there any other members of a particular Church, but ſuch as in profeſſion are beleevers and Saints. 2

The Church may have no office nor office-bearers, but ſuch as are by divine appointment, which are Elders or Deacons, or more particular- 3

ly, Paſtors, Teachers, Elders, and Deacons, by which Chriſt hath provided for all the neceſſities of the Church.

Although the civill and Eccleſiaſticall government be different kindes of governments, yet it is a principall part of the civill Magiſtrate, who is keeper of both Tables, to have a care of the Church, and to exerciſe his authoritie for the preſerving of Religion, and for the peace and ſafety of the Church, and where the Magiſtrate doth his dutie, it is a ſpeciall bleſſing of God, and he is to be obeyed in all things lawfull.

5 Each particular Church hath her owne power and authoritie, and the uſe and benefit of all the Ordinances of Chriſt, neither is there any thing to be done without the expreſſe or tacite conſent of the Congregation, in matters which are proper and peculiar to a particular Church, whether in election or ordination of Miniſters, or in admitting or excommunicating of members.

6 It is in many reſpects expedient both for the members of each Church, whether Miniſters or people, and for the right governing and well-being of the particular Churches in a Nation profeſſing Chriſtian Religion, that beſides their particular aſſemblyes and Elderſhips, they conveene by their Commiſſioners, Miniſters, and Elders in greater Aſſemblyes, that matters that concerne all the Churches within their bounds reſpective, may with common advice and conſent be agreed upon for their good and edification.

16. *It is juſt and reaſonable, that whoſoever would introduce a new forme, ſhould be obliged to demonſtrate aforehand, that the government he would introduce, be much better than the other, and able to recompence the loſſe thereof.* *Pet.*

There can be no loſſe of an evill, and therefore you need not call for a recompence either before or after, ſeeing Prelacy is an evill, as wee have proved and ſhall prove, it is neither to be recompenſed, nor moderated, nor reſerved, but preſently and wholly to be taken away, what ever the conſequence may be. The preſence of an errour hinders men from ſeeing the truth; if the government be for the preſent hurtfull, and the exerciſe miſchievous to others, we need not, wee ought not to ſpare it till we know what ſhall come in the roome. *Anſ.* 1.

And further we all ſee a platforme before us amongſt our brethren in the reformed Churches, which we conceive would give ſatisfaction in the maine, being according to the former ſix Propoſitions, and what alteration is to be made in ſuch things wherein one reformed Church differs from another, theſame may be effected withmore peace, than the Epiſcopacy can be continued. 2

17. *Wee may ſtill enjoy that government, which moſt probably holds its inſtitution from the Apoſtles.* *Pet.*

Wee are glad you ſuſpect your cauſe ſo farre, having no other than a ſandy foundation of probabilitie; what an evill is it that ſo many thouſands have ſuffered ſuch ſore things, in ſoules and bodies, in eſtates, liberties, and names, for meere *Anſ.*

probabilities, we bleſſe God we have more to ſay for our cauſe againſt Epiſcopacy than probables, and our reaſons from Scripture are theſe.

1 The whole charge of all the affaires of the Church of *Epheſus* was left to the Elders, *Act.* 20. where Saint *Paul* tells them, that the holy Ghoſt had made them overſeers over that flocke which they were ποιμαίνειν, and the word ſignifies in the judgement of all, both to feed and to rule.

2 Whatſoever you make to belong to Epiſcopacy, as Epiſcopacy, is either matter of juriſdiction, or ordination. Juriſdiction doth not belong to the Biſhop; for our Saviour Chriſt ſaith, *Goe tell the Church*, which Church to interpret of one man, is againſt that place, becauſe he ſaith, *Whatſoever yee binde*, againſt the courſe of Scripture, becauſe one man is never cald a Church, and againſt common ſenſe, becauſe the word *Church*, there ſignifies an aſſembly. And for Ordination, the Apoſtle ſaith unto *Timothy*, *The gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbyterie*, 1 Tim. 4. 14. therefore Ordination alſo belongs unto the Elders.

3 Wee finde no rules, nor inſtructions in Scripture for the ordering of Biſhops, as diſtinguiſhed from other Elders, Paſtors, and Teachers, and therefore wee cannot beleeve, that there is any ſuch diſtinct office: *Indicent nobis loca*, as *Voetius* ſpeakes, let them ſhew us thoſe places of Scripture, where is that peculiar Miniſtery, and where are thoſe ſpeciall inſtructions which belong to the Biſhops alone, and not unto other Paſtors?

Voetius cauſ. deſperat. Pap. l. 2. ſect. 12.

We

We finde in the judgement of the holy Ghoſt, that a Biſhop and Elder are all one, as appeares *Acts* 20. by comparing the ſeventeenth verſe with the twenty eight; thoſe that are called Elders in the ſeventeenth, are called Biſhops in the twenty eight; which the *Engliſh* tranſlates *Overſeers*, and onely here. * So *Titus* 1. 5. compared with the 7. where thoſe who are ſaid to be Elders in the fift verſe, are each of them called a Biſhop in the ſeventh; otherwiſe there ſhould be no force in the Particle, *For.* This is the arguing of the Apoſtle, ordaine Elders, verſ. 5. if any be blameleſſe, verſ. 6. for a Biſhop muſt be blameleſſe, verſ. 7. 4

* *Ex hoc loco manifeſtũ, eoſdem dici & fuiſſe Epiſcopos qui dicebantur, & erant presbyteri, alias nulla foret in textu Apoſtolico connexio, quamtamen particula*

διὰτοῦτο γὰρ diſertè ponit, quæ enim συνάφεια hæc foret? Illi conſtituendi ſunt Presbyteri qui ſunt ſine crimine, unius uxoris viri, quia Epiſcopum cujus officium, poteſtas, juriſdictio & gradus differt à presbytero oportet eſſe ſine crimine, unius uxoris virum. Gerard. de miniſterio Eccleſiaſtico.

One Biſhop now hath Juriſdiction over diverſe Counties and hundreds of Churches, but in the Apoſtles times, there were diverſe Biſhops in every Citie. *Titus* 1. 5. Elders in every Citie; who (as we have proved before) are the ſame with Biſhops, *Phil.* 1. 1. *Biſhops* and *Deacons* at *Philippi*; Its certaine in theſe places they were not all Chriſtians, it is moſt likely, very few of them, and yet thoſe few had divers Biſhops ſet over them; other kinde of Biſhops than theſe the Scripture knows not. Yet in theſe times the Elders had extraordinary gifts, as appeares *James* the fift, where the Apoſtle ſets downe a rule for all Churches in thoſe times, that when any was 5

ſick,

ſick, the Elders ſhould anoint him with oyle, and ſo he ſhould recover; if then Elders had then miraculous gifts, and yet there were divers appointed for every Citie, then it cannot be conceived, that now when Elders have no ſuch extraordinary gifts, yet that one ſhould be ſet over many Counties, it may be thouſands of Congregations.

6 The Scripture acknowledgeth no ſuperioritie or inferioritie between Officers of the ſame kinde. One Apoſtle was not over another, nor one Evangeliſt over another, nor one Prophet over another (indeed the Scripture ſaith, the ſpirits of the Prophets are ſubject to the Prophets, but this ſubjection was mutuall, one not having more power over another, than that other had over him) neither is one Deacon over another; and what colour of reaſon can be given, that one Paſtour or Teacher ſhould have power over another.

7 There is no mention in Scripture of any under an Apoſtle or Evangeliſt, that did performe any work of office in any place but in his owne particular Church; the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, which are made diſtinct officers in the 4th of the *Epheſians*, had their Commiſſion generall for all places without any limitation; but in this latitude of their Commiſſion, they have no ſucceſſours. There was no place where Apoſtles or Evangeliſts came, but they had the ſame power, which we ſuppoſe none of our Biſhops dare arrogate to themſelves. If therefore they ſucceed not Apoſtles

ſtles and Evangeliſts in the largeneſſe of their Commiſſion, then their ſucceſſion muſt be of thoſe Paſtors and Teachers, whom wee finde the holy Ghoſt hath ſet over particular Congregations.

If Church Officers be not limited to ſeverall Congregations, then there is no limitation by any divine Inſtitution, and if ſo, then a Paſtor may have many, yea, all Churches in the world under him, and ſo the Popedome muſt be granted at moſt inconvenient, and not againſt any divine Inſtitution. If it ſhould be ſaid, that though one can overſee divers, yet it followes not that he can overſee all. We anſwer, that no man can overſee diverſe, but by ſubſtitutes, and by ſubſtitutes he may overſee all, and ſo the difference will be onely in the inconvenience, and not in the unlawfulneſſe, which is in the nature of the thing. You have here our Arguments, and if they be weighed without prejudice, ſurely you your ſelves will judge them to be more than probabilities. Wee have not anſwered to every paſſage of this Petition; for wee finde many tautologies. Onely one paſſage there is more, which we cannot paſſe by, to which wee anſwer briefly, and then wee have done. 8

18. *You ſay, that this government by Biſhops, hath continued many ages without any alteration.* *Pet.*

If an alteration be made unto the better, what cauſe hath any to complaine, *Nullus pudor eſt ad* *Anſ.* 1.

meliora transire, Ambroſ. Epiſt. 31. ad Valent. It is no ſhame to change for the better.

2 If this government hath beene without any alteration, then it is the ſame every way that it was before the Reformation, and if ſo, then it is the very ſame which Antichriſt had retained many hundreds of yeares. Now wee will leave it to the conſideration of any indifferent man, whether he can thinke in his conſcience, that it is any way probable, that Antichriſt ſhould retaine the government of Chriſt ſo long in the ſimplicitie and puritie of it. Is it not the great deſigne of Antichriſt, to lift up himſelfe above Chriſt and his people? and by what meanes could he more readily effect this, than by corrupting the government? Had hee not power to doe it, ſeeing for many yeares hee did what he liſted in the Church? All doctrines that ſtood in his way, he hath corrupted, and can it be thought, that he ſhould leave government intire, according to inſtitution, which was moſt oppoſite to his deſigne? Pride and arrogancie, cauſe men above all things to ſeeke to bring government under their owne wills; and who ever ſince the beginning of the world ſweld with more pride and arrogancie than Antichriſt hath done, which appeares by his interdicting of Kingdomes, and bringing Princes under his feet. But now wee hope God will ſtirre up the ſpirits of the Princes of the earth, to caſt off with indignation, that baſe bondage and

and Babyloniſh tyranny, they have ſo long been under; for which, both wee and all the Churches of GOD, both doe, and ſhall cry to heaven to haſten.

FINIS.